

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of youth



Conference on the role of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations

Malta, 25 – 28 November 2014

Presentation and call for participants

Outline:

Social inclusion, specifically of young people in vulnerable situations, is a challenging topic throughout Europe and its neighbouring regions, ever more so in the aftermath of the recent economic crisis. It represents a common focus of both the EU and the Council of Europe youth policy. The goal of this conference is to explore the role of youth work in addressing common needs of youth in vulnerable situations and to share related knowledge and good examples of practice in Europe and neighbouring regions.

Social exclusion and vulnerability of young people affect various life domains (economic, political, social and cultural) and are linked to a complex array of factors such as gender, ethnicity, economic status, religious affiliation, sexual orientation etc. which might act to enable or constrain social integration.

Structural, ideological and individual factors play a role in processes of exclusion and be the origin of existing and at times multiple barriers to inclusion. Given the complexity that often characterizes situations of vulnerability, the role and potential of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations is not always clear and often relates to other questions concerning the position of youth work in a given national context and the specific (social) nature of youth work. Evidence from a variety of contexts suggests that youth work has a role to play but it is not a panacea for overcoming young people's social exclusion and its role should be discussed having in mind the wider policy context.

This event is related to the ongoing mapping of barriers to social inclusion for young people in vulnerable situations and will follow on the expert seminar on the same subject to be held in September of this year. It also follows up on recent EU-CoE youth partnership events in Malta, Tunisia and Jordan which led to concrete project proposals with a view to foster cooperation, to empower youth NGO's and to promote the development of knowledge-based youth work and youth policy. Given the relevance of youth work for the empowerment of young people from vulnerable groups, the conference will serve to discuss the results of the mapping of barriers, to listen to experiences from young people and to learn from youth work practice.

Policy Context:

The situation and social inclusion of diverse youth groups in vulnerable situations has been for several years among the key areas of concern for both the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

Social inclusion is a key priority of the [Europe 2020 Strategy](#) of the **European Union**, setting a common target to lift 20 million people out of the risk of poverty by 2020. This goal is backed by the flagship initiative 'European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion' and the Open Method of Coordination for social protection and social inclusion. While these policies have a strong bearing on youth, two policy initiatives deal specifically with the situation of young people: the flagship initiative '[Youth on the Move](#)' and the Youth Employment Package. Both measures have significant social inclusion objectives: to make education more accessible and better suited to young people's needs, to stimulate youth educational mobility (through the Erasmus+ Programme) and to encourage Member States to take measures to facilitate the transition from school to work. The Youth Employment Package includes actions such as the Youth Guarantee, Quality Framework for Traineeships, and the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

Complementing and supporting the above, the [EU Youth Strategy \(2010-2018\)](#) was developed with the principle objectives of creating more and equal opportunities for youth in education and the labour market and promoting social inclusion and solidarity of all young people. Social inclusion is one of the eight fields of action defined by the Strategy and was the focus of the second three-year work cycle of the Strategy (2013-2015) and of the Ireland-Lithuania-Greece Trio Presidency. The Social Inclusion Strategy for the Youth in Action programme and the work of SALTO Inclusion Resource Centre on the issue have been significant processes and tools in supporting the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities through youth work (youth mobility programmes). Building on the outcomes of the period 2007-2013, the Social Inclusion Strategy is currently undergoing a revision in order to increase its relevance for the Erasmus + Programme.

Two recent studies commissioned by the European Commission are highly relevant to the theme of this conference: The study '[Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union](#)' examines the value of different forms of youth work and identifies success factors that underpin effective youth work. The policy review '[Social inclusion of youth on the margins of society](#)', looks into the lives and aspirations of young people who face severe or multiple forms of social exclusion, analyses the causes and processes of their exclusion and focuses on policy solutions to overcome existing barriers to their inclusion.

For the **Council of Europe**, social cohesion is firmly based on human rights (as codified in the [European Convention on Human Rights](#), the [New Strategy and Council of Europe Action Plan for Social Cohesion](#) and the [Revised European Social Charter](#)), as well as an acceptance of shared responsibility for the welfare of all members of society, especially those who are at risk of poverty or exclusion. In line with this, the youth policy of the Council of Europe aims at "providing young people with equal opportunities and experience which enable them to develop knowledge, skills and competencies to play a full part in all aspects of society", as stated in the '[Agenda 2020](#)', which guides Council of Europe youth policy since 2008. The social inclusion strand therein puts special emphasis on:

- Supporting the integration of excluded young people;
- Promoting the recognition of non-formal education/learning, and strengthening young people's opportunities to reconcile private and working life;

- Ensuring young people's equal access to decent living conditions as well as to cultural, sporting and creative activities;
- Encouraging intergenerational dialogue and solidarity.

In 2009, the Council of Europe's youth sector initiated the '[Enter! Project](#)' aimed at the development of youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people, particularly in multicultural disadvantaged neighborhoods, with multi-dimensional social and economic imbalances experienced by young people living therein. This project was initiated in response to the growing concern and attention of the European Steering Committee on Youth and the Advisory Council on Youth - the governmental and non-governmental partners of the youth sector of the Council of Europe - to matters of social cohesion and inclusion of young people. The second edition of Enter! Is now underway.

Participants:

130 participants from research, practice, and policy from all over Europe and beyond, in particular from the regions of South-East Europe, Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, and South Mediterranean will participate in the event.

The majority of participants will be youth experts and young people with experience of the conference topic, but a certain number will come from other fields, including representatives of municipalities and other relevant stakeholders, e.g. from formal education and social service sectors, NGOs and social enterprises.

In particular the invitees will comprise:

- National Authorities in charge of youth (via the CDEJ and possibly the Youth Working Party), local and regional youth authorities
- Politicians and parliamentarians from European and national level
- National Agencies and the SALTO Resource Centres of the Youth in Action programme
- Youth NGOs (via the European Youth Forum and the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe Youth Department), youth workers and trainers
- Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) members, European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) correspondents, Youth (Research) Institutes/Observatories
- International organisations and structures with a youth agenda such as UN agencies, in particular UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, OECD, League of Arab States, Anna Lindh Foundation, Open Society Foundation etc.
- Representatives of the sectors relevant to young people (in particular employment, education, social services, health, housing, culture etc.)
- Facilitators/rapporteurs

Aim and objectives:

The aim of the conference is to analyse and discuss the role of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations in both European and South Mediterranean countries.

Objectives:

- To present the findings of the experts working on barriers to social inclusion encountered by young people in vulnerable situations and to discuss the results from European and South Mediterranean perspectives.
- To serve as a platform for the exchange of ideas on ways to support young people in vulnerable situations through youth work policies in Europe and its neighbouring regions.
- To explore common needs of young people in vulnerable situations and share knowledge and good practice related to youth work in addressing them.
- To contribute to the visibility of youth work and its role in reducing obstacles to social inclusion and to produce recommendations for youth work policy and practice in this regard.
- To initiate dialogues, discussions, debates, exchanges and possible co-operations among all stakeholders.

Working language

The conference will be held in English.

Timetable

The conference will start at 09:00 on Wednesday 26 November and end at 18:00 on Thursday, 27 November.

Venue, accommodation and meals

The conference will be held in Malta at the Dolmen Resort Hotel. For the duration of the conference the meals, and accommodation from 25 to 28 November will be provided and covered for the selected participants by the EU-CoE youth partnership.

Travel and subsistence expenses

Travel expenses to and from Malta will be covered by the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth, and reimbursed according to the rules of the Council of Europe. The reimbursements will be made by bank transfer after the conference.

Application procedure

All those interested in participating are requested to apply online at the following link **by 30 August 2014**:

<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/malta-application-form>

Further information

For further information, please contact youth-partnership@partnership-eu.coe.int

Programme outline

Wednesday, 26 November 2014

09.00	Opening Malta story - Youth social inclusion in Malta (NN, tbc) Broad European picture
10.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
10.30-	Reflection in subgroups on social inclusion and its regional dimensions
11.20 -	Quick feedback session and conclusions
12.00	Institutional inputs (European Commission, Council of Europe, EU-CoE youth partnership)
13.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.30-	Presentation of the mapping on barriers
15.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.00	Good practices (working groups)
17.30	Thought provoking inputs to stir reflection
19.00	<i>Dinner with thematic tables</i>

Thursday, 27 November 2014

09.00	Recapitulation 1 st day
09.30	Working groups on the following guiding points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sharing from different perspectives (fields) and national contexts• What are the needs• What is the role of youth work in addressing these needs• What support does youth work need• What other support is needed to address these needs.
13.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.30-	Preparing working groups inputs to panel
15.00	Panel
16.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
17.00	Closing panel
19.00	<i>Farewell dinner in traditional Maltese style</i>

Friday, 28 November 2014

Departures